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80 KINGSTON 1938

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ACTION ARA-15
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O R 142130Z MAR 80
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1758
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 1938
E.O.12065: GDS 3/14/86 (LAWRENCE L) OR-AMB
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: JAMAICAN ELECTION VIOLENCE BEGINS
1. C-ENTIRE TEXT
2. SUMMARY POLITICAL VIOLENCE LARGELY IN URBAN AREAS WHERE CONCENTRATIONSOF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES BORDER ON ONE ANOTHER HAS OCCURED WITH GREATER FREQUENCY IN THE LAST WEEK ACROSS JAMAICA. THE VIOLENCE HAS BEEN SEVERE ENOUGH TO DRIVE A NUMBER OF FAMIL ES TOSEEK REFUGE IN AREAS INHABITED BY MEMBRS OF THEIR OWN PARTY. THE TROUBLES HAVE BEEN CONFIDED MOSTLY TO THE KINGSTON METROPOLITIAN AREA, BUT UNFORTUNATELY SEEM TO BE SPREADING TO OTHER SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY AS TEMPERS FLARE. THE VIOLENCE COULD WELL RESULT FROM A CALCLATED ATTEMPT BY THE PARTIES TO READJUST POLITICAL CONCENTRATIONS PRIOR TO THE UPCOMING REGISTERATION OF VOTERS
THIS VIOLENCE SOFAR HAS NOT AFFECTED EMBASSY SECURITY OR
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TOURISM. END SUMMARY.
3. THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE HEADLINES WHAT APPEARS TO BE INCREASINGLY PARTISAN VIOLENCEDURING THE LAST WEEK. THE REPORTS MOSTLY MENITON VIOLENCE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE KINGSTON GHETTOS BUT WE HAVE HEARD FROM VARIOUS POLITICIANS AND OTHERS THAT OTHER URBAN AREAS (SPANISH TOWN, MAY PEN, MONTEGO BAY) HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY AFFECTED AND SOME COUNTRY AREAS. PARTICULARLY HONOVER. THIS TYPE OF VIOLENCE IS NO UNUSUAL IN JAMAICA ELECTION CAMPAIGNS BUT SOME EXPERIENCED GHETTO OBSERVERS ASERT THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE NOW IN QUANTITY QUALITY AND INTENT. WE HAVE HAD TO WITHDRAW SEVERL PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS FROM THE HOTTEST AREAS. BUT WISH TO EMPHASIZE IN THIS TELEGRAM THAT THE VIOLENCE WE ARE REPORTING IS RESTRICTED TO A FEW SPECIFIC AREAS, HAPPENS MOSTLY LATE

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AT NIGHT, POSES NO SECURITY PROBLEMS AS YET FOR US PERSONNEL HAS NOT IMPINGED UPON TOURIST AREAS OR TOURIST OPERATIONS.
4. THE MAJOR BATTLEGROUND IN KINGSTON SO FAR HAS BEEN IN THE HUNTS BAY SECTION OF SOUTHWEST KINGSTON JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP) ENCLAVES HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY MOBS WIELDING SMALL ARMS AND MOLOTOV COCKTAILS, HOSE CARS, AND OTHER PROPERTY HAVE BEEN BURNED AND LOOTED, AND ACCORDING TO THE JLP SEVERAL HUNDRED JLP FAMILIES HAVE FLED INTO THE SAFE PARTY TURF OF TIVOLI GARDENS. DESPITE PARTISAN CHARGES OF FAVORITISM IT SEEMS THAT THE POLICE HAVE BEEN MAKING A GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO CONTROL THE SITUATION BUT HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED. A SECONDARY BATTLE ZONE IN THE MOUNTAIN VIEW ROAD AREA OF SOUTHEAST KINGSTON HAS FEATURED NIGHTLY GUN BATTLES BUT SO FAR LITTLE DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE AS THE OUTNUMBERED BUT COMPACT JLP ENCLAVE SEEMS TO BE HOLDING ITS OWN. RELIABLE ESTIMATES OF CASUALTIES ARE HARD TO COME
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BY BUT THE DEATH TOLL SO FAR APPARENTLY IS LESS THAN TEN, WITH SEVERAL DOZEN WOUNDED. OTHER TRIBAL "BORDER" AREAS OF KINGSTON ARE EXPERIENCING SPORADIC RAIDS. AND THERE HAS BEEN A BIG REPRISAL RAID BY JLP GANGS AGAINST A PNP AREA KNOWN A LIZARD TOWN. ONE RESIDENT OF THE GHETTO DECRIBED THE NIGHT ACTIVITY AS SOUNDING LIKE THE SOUND TRACK FROM A WW II MOVIE.
5. REPORTS FROM SPANISH TOWN INDICATE A KIND OF TIT FOR TAT SPORADIC VIOLENCE WITH CARS AND HOUSE BURNED IN EQUAL MEASURE. THE INTIITATIVE THERE, AS IN KINGSTON SEEMS TO HAVE COME IN FROM THE PNP PARTISANS,
BUT WITH STRONG REPRISALS FROM THE JLP. IN CONTRAST THE VIOLENCE IN JAMAICA SECOND LARGEST CITY MONTEGO BAY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INSTIGATED BY THE JLP AGAINST A PNP MINORITY. THE PNP IN MONTEGO BAY ARE CHARGING THAT THE POLICE ARE PARTISAN,AGAINST THEM. AND ANGRY WORDS HVE BEEN EXCHANGED BETWEEN PNP LEADER VINCENT TULLOCJ, MP AND HIS COUSIN, WINSTON SPAULDING JLP SENATOR WHO IS RUNNING FOR A SEAT IN MONTEGO BAY. IN MOBAY THE BASHING UP (APPARENTLY NOT MUCH SHOOTING) HAS SO FAR OCCURED WELL AWAY FROM TOURIST AREAS.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 1938
6. A WELL INFORMED EXPERIENCE JLP POLITICAN COMMENTED TO US THAT NONE OF THIS PARTISAN VIOLENCEIS SPONTANEOUS IT IS A DELIBERATE CALCUTATED ELECTION TACTIC TO SHIFT BLOCS OF VOTERS AROUND BY TERROR AND INTIMIDATION PRIOR TO THE UPCOMMING REGISTRATION OF ALL VOTERS, THE TACTIC HAS BEEN USED IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS CAMPAIGNS, HE OF COURSE ASSERTED THAT IT WASALL PNP ONE SIDED BUT AFTER SOME PROBING ADMITTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USED BY BOTH SIDES. HE DID HOWEVER, MAKE A GOOD CASE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IN KINGSTON THE MAJOR BASHING SO FAR AS BEEN PNP PUSHING OUT JLP BUT HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT THIS BLOODY GAME IS STILL IN THE FIRST INNING.HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT EVEN IN THE EARLY INNINGS THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND THE SHEER MALEVOLENT TYPE OF VIOLENCE HAS EXCEEDED EARLIER PERIOD AND THAT THE CALCUTATED "GEOPOLITICAL"PARTISAN MANEUVERING IS FAR BEYOND PREVIOUS ELECTIONS.
7. COMMENT: WE DO NOT WANT TO SOUND ANY ALARMS SINCE
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THE ABOVE DESCRIBED OCCURANCES ARE STILL RELATVELY CONTAINED. THE POLITICAL DIRFCTORATES HAVE NOT BEEN PAYING MUCH ATTENTION TOTHEEVENTS ONLY THE NEWSPAPER AND THE HOSPITALS) NOTICE. MANLEY AS IS OFTEN THE CASE IS CAUGHT UP IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS (HE IS OFF TO GRENADA AND BARBADOS) OPPOSITION LEADER EDWARD SEAGA IS OFF THE ISLAND ON A EXTENDED TRIP NOMINALLY UNESCO BUT MOSTLY TO RAISE MONEY. THE NATIONAL ATTENTION IS ON VARIOUS CRIPPLING STRIKES (EG A WATER WORKERS STRIKE FOR THE LAST WEEK, CUTTING OFF WATER TO MOST OF KINGSTON FOR DAYS AND A THREATENED STRIKETO THE ENTIRE CIVIL SERVICE). IT IS PERHAP INDICATIVE OF A CERAIN INSOUCIANCE IN THE POPULACE HERE TTHAT THE FAIRLY SERIOUSVIOLENCE IS BEING

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SHRUGGED OFF. THERE IS IN JAMAICA BOTH A TRADITION OF VIOLENT POLITICS AND A KIND OF ABHORRENCE OF ALLOWING VIOLENCE TO GO BEYOND CERTAIN TOLERABLE LIMITS.BUT WE CAUTION AGAINST TOO MUCH INSISTENCE ON HISTORY BECAUSE HISTORY HEREIS SHORT. AMBIGUOUS AND GIVES NOT ENOUGH DATA TO PREDICT. ALL WE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN IS THAT THE GHETTOS OF KINGSTON AND A FEWOTHER AREAS. ARE ALREADY STARTING TO SPILL BLOOD AND IT SEEMS THAT MORE RATHER THAN THE SAME OR LESS IS THE PROSPECT.
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